

ANA Inspiration

Thursday, April 1, 2021

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club

Cheyenne Knight

Quick Quotes

Q. Cheyenne, how are you feeling after a strong first round here at ANA Inspiration?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: I'm a little frustrated right now. Two bogeys coming in on 16 and 17. Hit a bad drive on 16. Had to chip it out of the rough. Had a terrible lie. Hit it a little too far on 17. Was kind of on the back edge.

And not birdieing 18, I mean, it's still a great round. Just there is a lot of golf left, 54 holes.

But overall I played pretty solid. Kept the ball in the fairway. Just the last kind of six holes I started missing the fairway, which isn't like me. I've got to clean that up for tomorrow.

Q. You were able to have a couple strong birdies, especially on the front nine. What was working so well for you?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Yeah, made a really good par save on No. 3. Made like a 25-footer after hitting it in the rough and just had to chip out, and I really started hitting quality shots starting on No. 7 when I hit it to about six feet for birdie.

Good one on 8 as well.

And so from there on it was like really easy. In the middle part of my round had a lot of birdie opportunities, and kind of in the end it was kind of going backwards, but still a really solid round. Just hitting a lot of fairways and greens, and that's crucial out here.

Q. Second time here at the ANA Inspiration. What has it been like preparing for the first major of the season?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: I've loved it. Last year in September when we played it wasn't how it normally plays to say the least. Just when I -- I felt really good last week with my ball striking trending in the right direction. This course fits me pretty well, how straight I hit it and the greens are bermuda and that's what I grew up on so I'm



very comfortable with that.

That's a good start to the first major of the year.

Q. Seems like every week we're having you in to talk. That's a good thing. Where are you in your game now that we're requiring you to come in every week?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Yeah, I talked to you a little bit about that. I switched swing instructors in January to Randy Smith, Royal Oaks in Dallas, and he has been the biggest help in my confidence and ball striking. We changed my grip and just like getting the club more on plane going back.

I just have confidence now where my ball is going, and if I do miss a shot I know what it's from. I've always been a really good chipper and putter of the ball, but usually that's putting for par. So actually having birdie opportunities is a huge help, and Randy has like just kind of transformed my ball striking in the only three months we've worked together.

Q. A lot of players who have chased distance, that can go either way, is that something you're working on or is it just more consistency?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: A little bit of both. Randy says I have another gear. I just have to be more confident to use it more. I think just because the last -- before I saw Randy I was kind of spraying it each way so he said I was a bit damaged, to say the least.

So like we're working on a strong finish, which means like I'm moving through the ball well and aggressively. I picked up some miles an hour with better mechanics, but always trying to get a little further because it'll definitely help me having shorter clubs into the greens in the long run.

Q. I was going to say, what does that do mentally for you? You said you know where you're hitting the ball and how to fix it. How does that help not only your golf game, but the mental game as well?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: It's a huge help. I'm enjoying myself and it's not so stressful because I know what I'm doing and what I need to do as well. I was talking to my mental coach last night just talking about, you know, this is



the best I've felt coming into a tournament in a long time. I was like, I don't know if that's a good or bad thing, but I'm very confident in all the aspects of my game.

Yeah, and you're not going to hit every shot perfect. I mean, I didn't like on the last few holes coming in. That's golf. You just have to brush it off and focus on the next one.

Q. I feel like it's coming also from your experience? You are not a rookie anymore, but you definitely know how to save it if the mental game isn't there.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Exactly.

Q. You mention a mental coach. Have you worked with them for a while?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Yeah, I've worked with Fran since I was 12 years old, so he knows my game really well and he knows kind of what I need to continue to improve on in getting in those pressure situations, because I've never been in contention in a major before and that was one of my goals this year. How I apply myself to do that and how I respond in those pressure situations is going to be huge.

And just like enjoying the moment and the opportunity of being able to contend this week.

Q. What's there to work on for tomorrow as you keep yourself in one of your goals here as being in contention?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Fairways and greens. Keep the pedal down. Keep being aggressive. Keep playing the middle of the green if I need to, but just keep focusing on my strengths and take it one shot at a time and just keep being aggressive.

Q. I remember some of our first talks when you were on the Symetra Tour, and obviously you had a great career at Alabama. I think you came out on the Symetra Tour and expected that to just continue as soon as you stepped out there.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Yeah.

Q. What did you learn from those early days of your transition to pro golf that has maybe helped in your transition to success out here?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Right, yeah, Zach saw some brutal days on the Symetra Tour. I just thought professional golf was going to be so easy and it's not. It's mentally draining because I feel like you put so much of your self-worth in

how you play.

So now I just try to appreciate the moments more and not put so much pressure on myself and have those high expectations to perform, but just enjoy the process and the highs and the lows.

Because I definitely wanted it too much for a long time. Just like letting it come to me and just taking golf for what it is and realize like -- you know, Easter Sunday is coming up, and realize there is a lot more important things than golf and my identity is not in my score but in a lot of other stuff.

Q. How did the nerves at a major championship compare to the nerves at a normal tour event?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Since there is no fans I feel like there is not a huge difference, but obviously walking up 18 you know it's a major just like me growing up watching people walk up the 18th having a chance to win.

So it's a little bit different. Everyone knows in the back of their minds what it means, but with the fans you can't really tell. Just the conditions, I mean, it's hard out there. I think that's what makes it a major championship as well. Pars go a long way, and if you make a mistake just try to make a bogey.

The nerves are always the same and try not to -- just treat every tournament like a normal one.

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